

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 070846Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3235

INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

S E C R E T SINGAPORE 3431

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, SN, MY

SUBJ: VISIT OF US TEAM TO DISCUSS COUNTER-INSURGENCY  
EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING

REF: A. SINGAPORE 3216; B. K.L. 4500; C. K.L. 4074

1. AGREE WITH THRUST OF REFTEL B THAT US SHOULD ENDEAVOR TO AVOID A MILITARY RELATIONSHIP WITH SINGAPORE WHICH COULD LEGITIMATELY BE INTERPRETED AS SUPPORTING A THREATENING APPROACH TO MALAYSIA. AT SAME TIME WE BELIEVE USG REFUSAL TO RESPOND POSITIVELY TO GOS INTEREST IN PREPARING ITSELF TO DEFEND ITSELF AGAINST FUTURE COMMUNIST INSURGENCY THREAT FROM THE NORTH COULD BE MISINTERPRETED BY GOS AND ADVERSELY AFFECT NOT ONLY BILATERAL RELATIONS BUT ALSO POSSIBLY US INTERESTS IN SINGAPORE.

2. WE ARE SOMEWHAT SURPRISED THAT GOM WOULD CONSIDER ESTABLISHMENT OF JUNGLE WARFARE SCHOOL IN BRUNEI AS PARTICULARLY THREATENING AND DIRECTED AGAINST MALAYSIA. ANY SINGAPOREAN MILITARY PERSONNEL TRAINED IN BRUNEI WOULD BE IN SUCH SMALL NUMBERS THAT WE THINK GOM WOULD HAVE DIFFICULTY IN MAKING A JUSTIFIABLE CASE THAT THEIR PRESENCE CONSTITUTED A REAL THREAT TO EAST MALAYSIA. MORE IMPORTANTLY, REF C (PARA 5) REPORTED THAT CHARGE DILLON EXPLAINED TO PRIME MINISTER RAZAK THAT GOS HAD MADE REQUESTS TO USG FOR COUNTER-INSURGENCY TRAINING AND EQUIPMENT SIMILAR TO THOSE MADE BY GOM. ACCORDING THIS MESSAGE RAZAK SAW NO PROBLEM AND COMMENTED THAT "WE AND SINGAPORE ARE

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ALL IN THIS TOGETHER, AS IS THAILAND." EMBASSY DOES NOT PROPOSE

TO READ TOO MUCH INTO THIS, BUT RAZAK'S COMMENTS WOULD SEEM TO REVEAL SOME UNDERSTANDING BY GOM WHY GOS WOULD CONSIDER IT NECESSARY TO DEVELOP A COUNTER-INSURGENCY CAPABILITY.

3. AS ADDRESSEES AWARE, GOS HAS LONG SOUGHT TO TRAIN ITS FORCES AT MALAYSIAN JUNGLE WARFARE SCHOOL IN ULU TIRAM (STATE OF JOHORE), BUT HAS ALWAYS BEEN REBUFFED BY GOM. GIVEN THE ABSENCE OF ANY JUNGLE TERRAIN IN SINGAPORE GOS WILL HAVE TO ESTABLISH OR HAVE ACCESS TO SOME JUNGLE WARFARE TRAINING OUTSIDE OF SINGAPORE IF IT IS TO HAVE ANY CHANCE OF DEVELOPING THIS CAPABILITY. WE RECOGNIZE THE CHOICE OF BRUNEI AS A LOCATION IS POLITICALLY SENSITIVE IN VIEW OF THE CURRENT POOR STATE OF MALAYSIA/BRUNEI RELATIONS. FOR THIS REASON BELIEVE US SHOULD SCRUPULOUSLY AVOID INVOLVING ITSELF IN DEVELOPMENT OF JWS SCHOOL IN BRUNEI. ADDRESSEES WILL NOTE EMBASSY'S CAUTIOUS RESPONSE TO GOS REQUEST FOR COMMENTS RE POLITICAL ADVISABILITY OF ESTABLISHING SUCH A SCHOOL (SEE PARA 3C REF A.).

4. DURING PAST FEW YEARS GOS HAS TRAINED TROOPS IN THAILAND, TAIWAN AND NEW ZEALAND AS WELL AS BRUNEI WITHOUT ANY SIGNIFICANT REPERCUSSIONS FROM MALAYSIA OR EXPRESSION OF GOM CONCERN. THEREFORE EMBASSY SUGGESTS WE COULD PROVIDE EXCESS C-130S TO GOS OR EXTEND FMS CREDIT IN CONNECTION WITH SALE OF NEW C-130S WITHOUT UPSETTING GOM UNDULY. AS REF B NOTES THESE AIRCRAFT COULD ALSO BE USED FOR COASTAL SURVEILLANCE AND AIR/SEA RESCUE. BELIEVE ACQUISITION OF HELICOPTERS UNDER FMS CREDIT SALE COULD ALSO BE JUSTIFIED ON GROUNDS THAT THEY COULD BE USED FOR AIR/SEA RESCUE AND CIVILIAN PURPOSES AS WELL AS FOR MILITARY OPERATIONS. WE AGREE THAT FINANCING PURCHASE OF APCs, HOWITZERS, AND RIVERINE CRAFT THROUGH USE OF FMS CREDIT IS MORE QUESTIONABLE AND THAT CASH SALES WOULD PROBABLY BE MORE APPROPRIATE.

5. GOS HAS NOT YET REQUESTED FMS CREDIT TO FINANCE ANY OF THESE PURCHASES AND EMBASSY WILL ENCOURAGE GOS TO STICK TO CASH SALES TO EXTENT POSSIBLE--ESPECIALLY FOR ITEMS IT COULD EASILY PURCHASE WITHOUT CREDIT. WHEN TEAM WAS HERE IT EXPLAINED TO GOS THAT SINGAPORE IS DEVELOPED COUNTRY AND IS IN A BETTER FINANCIAL POSITION TO PURCHASE ITS EQUIPMENT NEEDS WITH CASH THAN MANY OTHER GOVERNMENTS. FURTHERMORE GOS WAS ADVISED THAT ALLOCATION  
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OF FMS CREDIT TO SINGAPORE COULD LEAD TO EXTENSIVE PUBLIC SCRUTINY AND SPECULATION RE GOS PLANS AND PURPOSES WHICH GOS MIGHT FIND EMBARRASSING IN ITS FOREIGN RELATIONS. HOWEVER, WITH RESPECT TO SUCH EXPENSIVE ITEMS AS C-130S AND HELICOPTERS, EMBASSY DOES NOT BELIEVE USG SHOULD PRECLUDE POSSIBILITY OF EXTENDING FMS CREDIT OR PROVIDING FROM EXCESS. HOLDRIDGE

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